

Microsoft Word Templates and Accessibility

What is a Word template?

A Word template (or stylesheet) has a .dot (**d**ocument **t**emplate) extension. It defines paragraph and character styles that can be used in an associated Word document. It can also define a page layout, headers and footers, and “boiler plate” text for a new document that uses the template.

Word templates are stored by default in C:\Documents and Settings*username*\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\ in Windows XP

Most Word users use the Normal.dot template and the Normal style. They format their documents “on the fly,” and any changes require updates throughout the entire document.

Why use a Word template?

Using a Word template has advantages similar to that of using the style list in TeamSite. The styles are maintained in one file, similar to a Cascading Stylesheet (.css file) for a website. Changing a style in a template can update all text that uses that style throughout a Word document.

By using styles -- heading styles especially -- you will create a Word document that has structure. PDF conversion will produce a more accessible document. Copying content into TeamSite Visual Editor from a Word document with styles applied will require less formatting to produce a correctly and accessibly tagged XML chunk.

Using Heading styles allows you to generate a Table of Contents for a document.

What are some of the standard Word styles?

Style Name	Description
Normal	Base font size and type
Body Text	Normal style with vertical spacing to create a paragraph without requiring a double carriage return
Heading 1	Top level heading (For conversion to XML chunks in TeamSite), reserve this tag for the chunk title.
Heading 2	Subheadings in a document
Heading 3	Sub-subheadings in a document
List Bullet, List Bullet 2	Bulleted list item
List Number, List Number 2	Numbered list item
List Continue, List Continue 2	Indented paragraph used for a new paragraph of text that is part of a list
List, List 2	Hanging indent format with no number or bullet
TOC 1, TOC 2, TOC 3	Styles for the table of contents entries

How do I Install a Word template?

1. From Explorer, locate the Templates folder, typically C:\Documents and Settings\username\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates.
2. Copy the template (.dot) file to that folder, or create a subfolder for your personal templates.

How do I attach a template to my Word document?

Attaching a template means associating the styles between the template and the document.

Note: In the Tools menu, Options, File Locations tab, be sure that the User Templates location specifies the location of your templates.

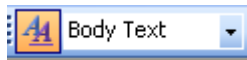
1. From the Tools menu, click Templates and Add-ins....
2. In the Templates tab, click Attach.
3. Locate the template that you want to use, and click Open.

How do I apply styles to my document?

1. From the View menu (in Word), click Toolbars and then Formatting to display the Formatting toolbar in Word.



The Style menu is at the far left of the Formatting toolbar.



2. Click in the text where you want to apply a paragraph style.
3. Open the Style menu by clicking the down arrow at the right, and select the style.

Note: If you are using the List Number style, you will need to restart the numbering with each new procedure. Right-click the first item in the list and click Restart Numbering.

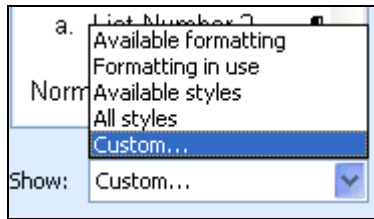
How do I simplify or customize the Style menu?

1. From the Formatting menu, click Styles and Formatting. All styles are listed in the task pane.

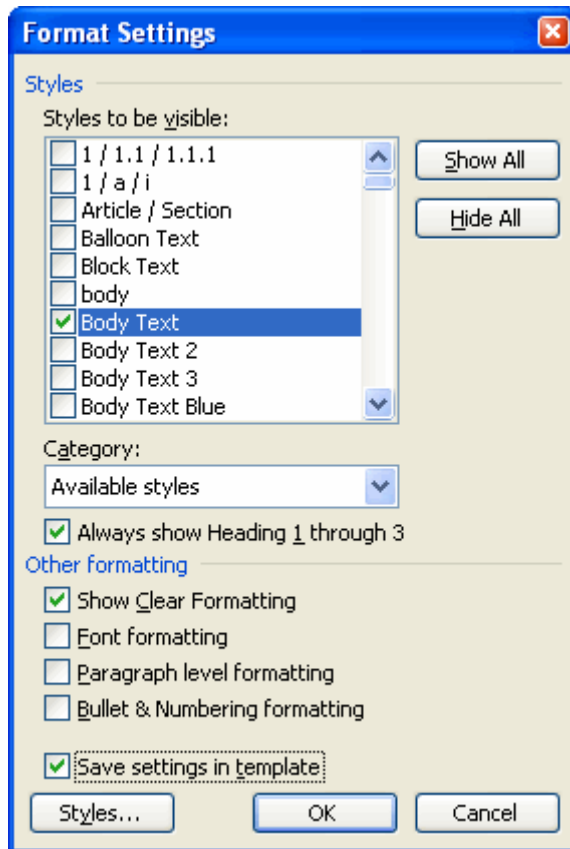


2. In the Show pull-down menu at the bottom of the task pane, choose Customize.

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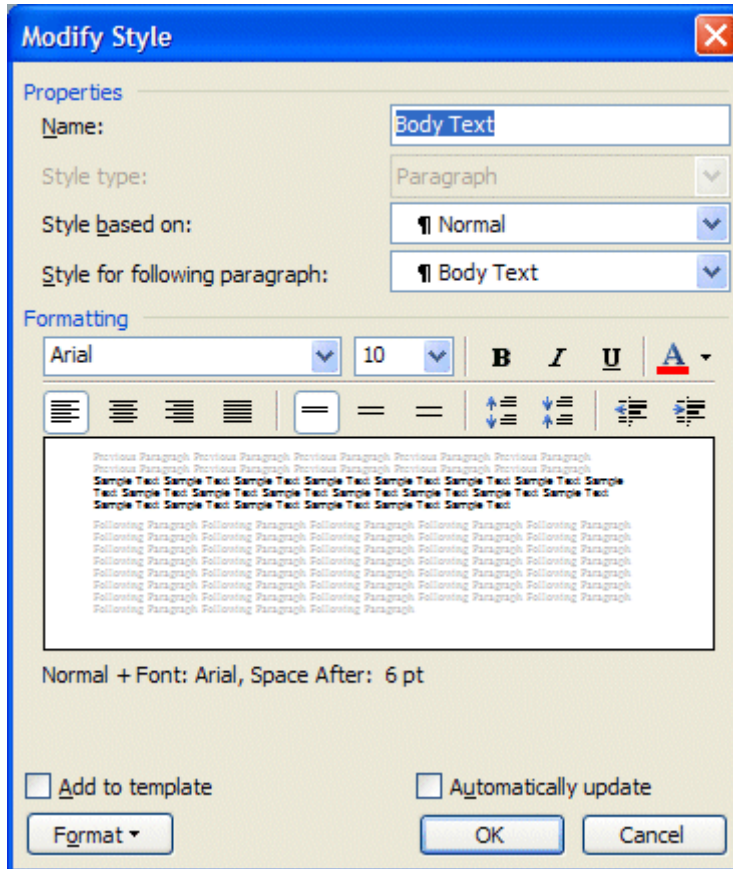


3. Check the styles that you want to appear in the Style menu.
4. Uncheck Other formatting options.
5. Check Save Settings in Template.



How do I modify a style in a template?

1. From the Formatting menu, click Styles and Formatting. All styles are listed in the task pane.
2. Position your cursor over a style in the task pane. Click the down arrow that is displayed to the far right of the style name.
3. Click Modify.
4. Make changes, check Add to template, and click OK.

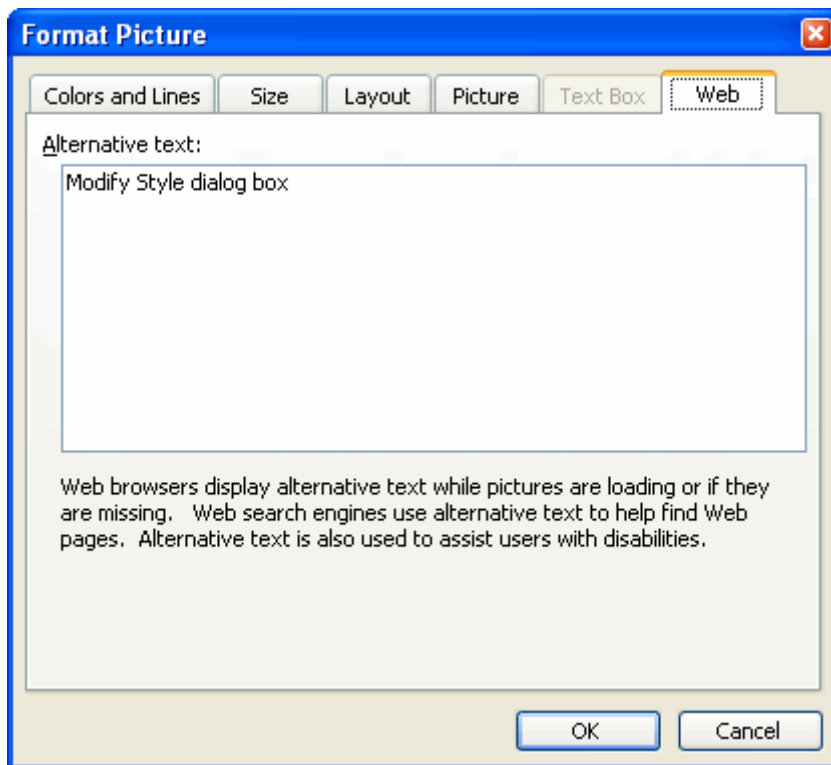


Adding “Alt-Text” to images

An accessibility requirement for all file formats is text equivalents (“alt-text”) for images. By adding alternative text in Word, this information survives document revisions and conversions.

To add alt-text to an image in Word:

1. Right-click the image, and click Format Picture.
-or-
Double-click the image.
2. Click the Web tab, and enter alternative text that describes the image in the text box.



Word-to-PDF conversion

By using standard Word styles and by keeping the document format and flow simple, the PDF conversion should create a document that is accessible. The tremendous advantage of focusing on accessibility in the Word document is that those settings remain in the Word document every time you do a conversion to PDF. Any accessibility work you do in Acrobat is overwritten in the document conversion process.

Conversion to PDF from Word produces tagged and accessible* documents when the Word document:

- Has structure (headings)
- Uses standard styles (list styles, for example)
- Has alternative text for images
- Has a simple format (no images in headers and footers, for example)

Most important is that you don't lose your accessibility tagging and settings with every revision of the source document.

* You need to specify a language from Adobe Acrobat to pass the full accessibility check.

How do I specify the language in a PDF?

The only accessibility issue that you always must fix from Adobe Acrobat is the language specification. To specify the language:

1. In Adobe Acrobat, from the File menu, click Document Properties and the Advanced tab.
2. For Language, choose English US.

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